India—Japan Standing Committee Meeting

1290. SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a meeting of India—Japan Standing Committee was held during the last week of November, 1993 in New Delhi;

(b) if so, details thereof with background for holding such a meeting;

(c) whether some items of agenda of the meeting were in the interest of India;

(d) if so, the details thereof and steps being taken to achieve objectivs of this meeting; and

(e) if not, the reasons for holding such a meeting?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir. 16th Joint Meeting of India—Japan Standing Committee was held on November 25-26, 1993 in New Delhi.

(b) Standing Committees have been set up under the aegis of the India—Japan Business Cooperation Committee to review certain issues in greater detail and make recommendations for the agenda for the main meetings.

(c) to (e) Expansion of Two-way Trade, particularly exports from India, increasing Japanese investment in India and bilateral co-operation in sectors such as Infrastructure, Power and Telecommunications mainly comprised the agenda of the Standing Committees. India—Japan Business Co-operation Committee, as also Standing Committees thereunder are serviced on the Indian side by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry. Government have so far not received any specific proposals based on the deliberations in the meetings of the Standing Committees held on November 25-26, 1993.

Progress in Trade Relations with C.I.S.

1291. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what progress has been made by Government in its efforts to improve trade relations with countries belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States (C.I.S.);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons thereof; and

(d) what fresh steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The following may be noted as some areas of progress in recent months made by Government in its efforts to improve trade relations with countries belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States:

(i) All necessary agreements have been concluded with the Russian Federation for the repayment by India of the State credits granted by the former USSR to be effected through export of goods and services from India.

(ii) During Prime Minister's visit to Uzbekistan and Kazakistan, understanding was reached for cooperation in a wide ranging specific areas of trade and economic cooperation.

(iii) Conclusion of bilateral agreements on trade and economic cooperation with Belarus, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Tajikstan.

(iv) Signing of agreements for extension of Government credits of US $ 10 million each to Uzbekistan and Kazakistan.

(v) First meetings of inter-governmental Joint Commissions held wih Uzbekistan and Kazakistan.

(vi) Further exchange of high level official and business delegations with the Russian Federation, Uzbekistan, Kazakhistan, Kyrghyzstan, Belarus, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania and Tajikstan.

(vii) An experts' study team has visited Iran and is to shortly visit Central Asian Republics in order to develop the transit route via Iran for India's trade with Central Asian Republics.

(viii) A study team from the State Bank of India has visited Russia, Uzbekistan and Kazakhistan towards the objective of setting up joint ventures banks in these countries and for consultations with identified and potential partners. Similar efforts are progressing with Ukraine too.

(ix) Measures to promote consignment exports, availability of commercial export credits and to formulate a planned participation in trade fairs in CIS countries have made further progress.

(x) Establishment of inter-banking correspondent relationship with all Central Asian Republics has been concluded. A representative office of the State Bank of India has since started functioning in Tashkent.

(xi) Promotion of direct air services. According to the latest statistics available from DGSI&S, India's exports to the 15 Republics which formerly constituted USSR have registered a growth of 18.61% in the period April—August 1993 (Rs. 846.2 crores) over the corresponding period of 1992 (Rs. 713.42 crores). Even in US $ terms, the growth comes to 8.09%.

(c) The question does not arise.

(d) Our future strategy in this regard, besides concluding the above mentioned measures under implementation, includes promotion of further direct and more intensive interaction between the business sectors, promotion of joint ventures including jont trading ventures, joint ventures of production sharing basis and for third country markets, identification and development of a more viable trade and transit routes for all CIS countries, encouragement of brand promotion, publicity and media compaigns and emphasis on quality.

Export of Shoes

1292. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India lags behind other countries in export of shoes ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) The global market for shoes in 1990 was estimated to be of a value of about 19 billion US dollars of which India's share was about 100 million US dollars. India's exports have increased from about Rs. 69 crores in 1987-88 to about Rs. 320 crores in 1991-92. Korea, China, Italy, Brazil and Spain were the leading exporters.

Export of footwear including shoes is engaging priority attention of the Government, and a number of measures have been taken to boost exports. These *inter-alia* include setting up of a Footwear Design and Development Instritute, setting up of Design Studies with CAD/CAM facilities, organising an International Shoe Fair for the first time in India and launching a National Leather Development Programme with UNDP assistance for an integrated development of the industry.

Technical Credit Released to Russia to Import F.C.V. Tobacco

1293. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) what is the total amount of technical credit released to Russia, to import F.C.V. Tobacco from India ; how much quantity of Tobacco contracted is to be imported from India and how much of it has been shipped, so, far ;

(b) when the amount was released and how much of it has been utilised ;